

# *Builders of Uintah*



Dragon, it was almost impossible to recognize them.

In 1906, after the Uintah Railway Co. had completed the line from Mack to Dragon, the mail

came from Dragon to Vernal, Fort Duchesne, Myton and Duchesne for a short time.

It was during this time that Johnny McAndrews was superintendent of the stage, mail, and



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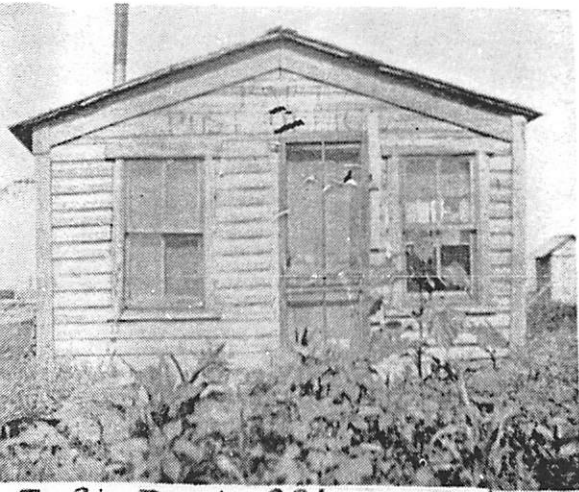
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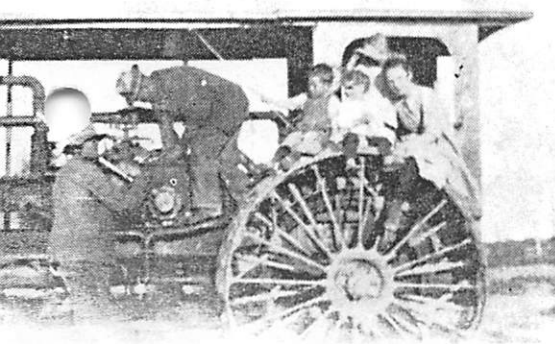
# La Point History



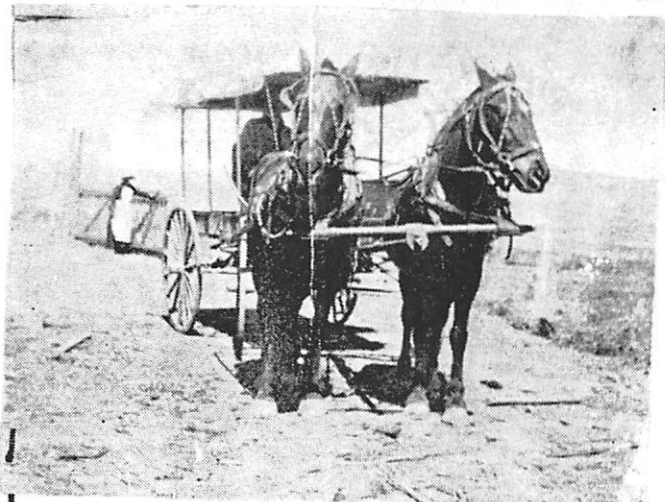
Taft Postoffice. Mail was carried by horseback from Vernal. Building was later moved and town renamed Lapoint.



James C. Hacking store. Standing left to right: John Warburton Nyberg, James C. Hacking, and old man Snake Pete.



Lapoint L.D.S. Chapel. Completed in 1935 under the direction of Jeremiah Harrison, the sixth bishop of Lapoint. Group in picture is Lapoint Sunday School.



First white topped buggy to come to Lapoint. Owned by Cyrus A. Thompson.



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#### SERVICE

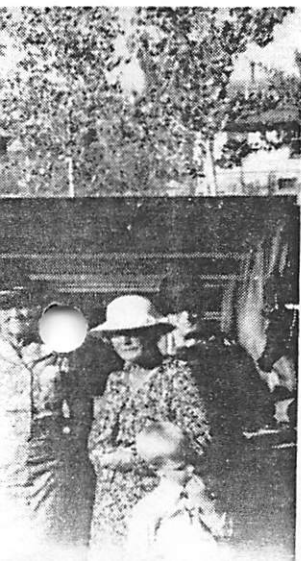
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#### CANALS

was first started in  
n the spring of 1888.  
Brush Creek over the  
because of the Burns  
e valley. The Canal  
There were places



S. B. Snow mail from Jensen to Vernal

*Builders of Uintah*

around the hill where it was built that were so steep  
that they had to dig a trench with shovels for the  
horse to stand in. They made the first few rounds  
with a plow and one single horse. They used a  
side-hill plow made of cast iron. This canal is still  
used to carry the irrigation water of a good share  
of the valley. They estimate that it serves approxi-  
mately 1300 acres. A few years ago the Burns  
Bench Irrigation Company felt that their rights  
were being challenged and taken by the Buck Pas-  
ture Reservoir Co. A large reservoir was being built  
in Buck Pasture and it would affect the supply of  
water that came down through Brush Creek which  
was the source of the water of the Burns Bench  
Canal. The Burns Bench Irrigation Co. filed a  
protest against the application of the Buck Pasture  
Reservoir Co. Joseph Dudley headed the delega-  
tion in making the protest. But finally a settlement  
was reached and the protest was withdrawn and  
Buck Pasture Reservoir was built in order to help  
the farmers on the other side of Ashley Valley to

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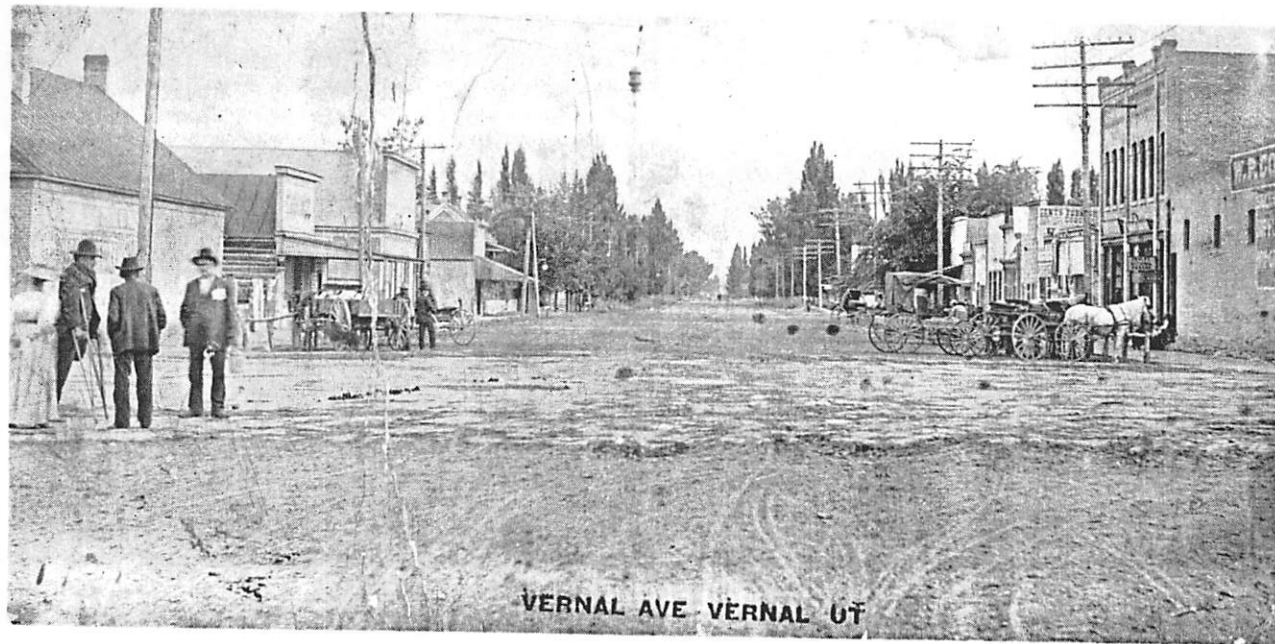


duction of the name Vernal.

"Wednesday afternoon the planing mill owned by Al. Johnston was burned to the ground."

In a January, 1892 issue, one reads the an-

plied that he would accept the name Vernal for the new post office and thus the matter was settled. In the conflict that ensued the name was powerful enough to establish itself as the name of our progressive city."



Two Hundred Thirty-four

William Gibson the first subscriber. The article gives the reader the condition of 1891 and a few years previous.

"Who of us who view our day, but unconsciously contrast it with the day of three or four years ago. It is little more than a desert, with a few of the evidences of progress now in the improved farms and ten line dwellings, and the herds throughout the valley. If the day in the valley, what has it been in Blythe and Mitchell's store on has grown in less than four years town with substantial business, running water, shade and fruit trees not everything to bring prosperity to land, unlimited grazing, thousands and gypsum and as rich gold, silver prospects as there are in the territory. Itum claims that have been worked.

From the Uintah Papoose one finds the following article that amount of advancement along the industry by 1891:

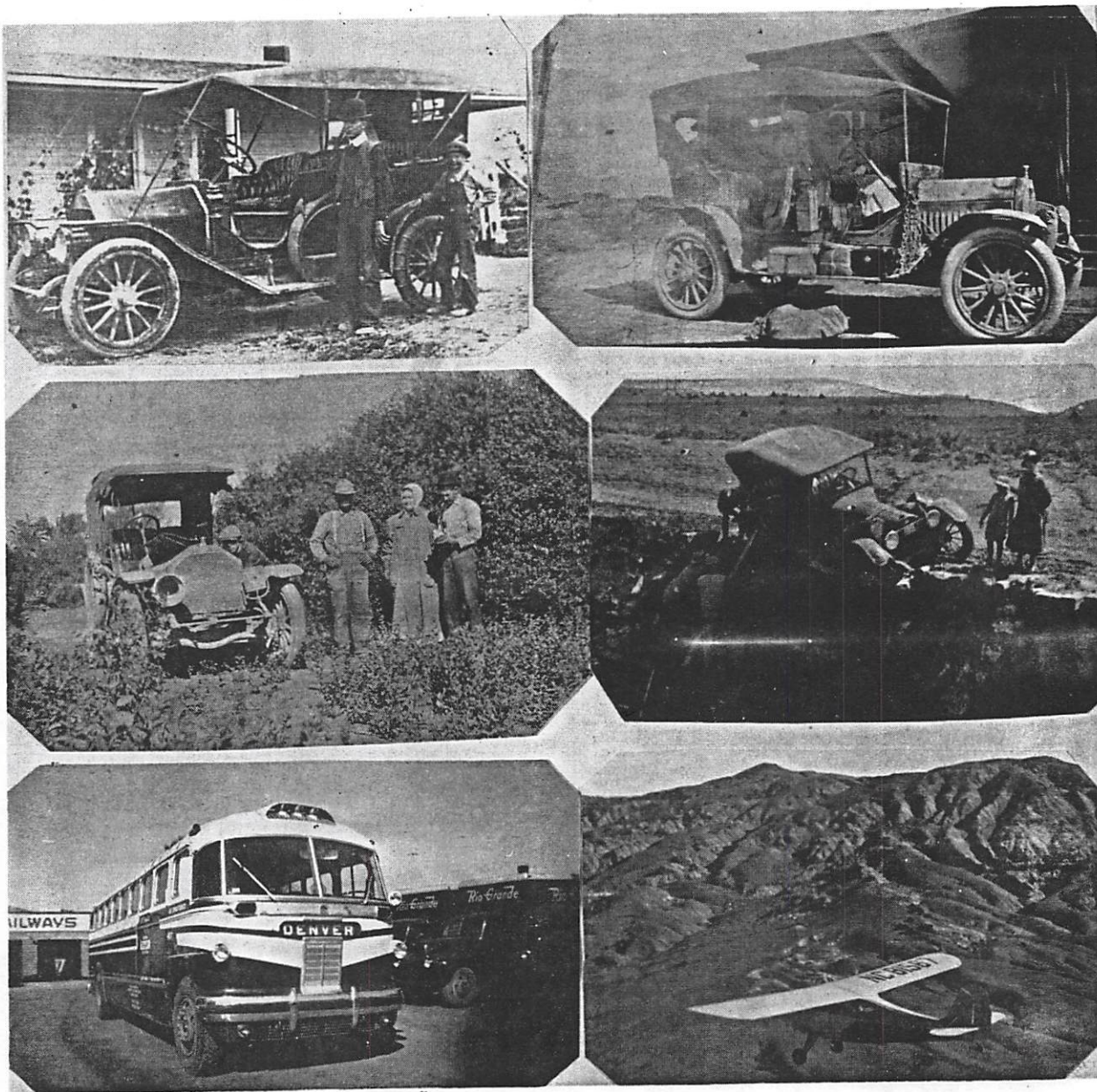
"Two nights last week it ho trees through. Yellow peaches a



began closing the distance between himself and Davis. Davis jumped off his horse at the mouth of Ashley Canyon and made a stand behind a big boulder where Pope held him until other pursuers arrived. At the next election, John T. Pope was nominated and elected sheriff without his knowledge. He served two terms at a salary of \$300 per year, as the territorial laws provided. His years as sheriff covered those years when the outlaws in Brown's Hole were most aggressive. Through Pope's fearlessness he merited the enmity of the outlaw element. One of his big jobs was to check the cat-

tle rustlers as there were plenty of them in the county. One group known as Maxwell's Gang, came from Nine-mile Canyon where they stole the cattle and then drove them to Price to be sold. Pope cleared the county of such men as these and had the reputation of being one of the greatest sheriffs Uintah county ever had.

Some of the outlaws of his time were: Harry Tracy, Matt Warner, Butch Cassidy, Iza Tay, Harvey Logan, Jack Bennett, Johnson, Trant, and two unknown Mexicans killed by Pope.



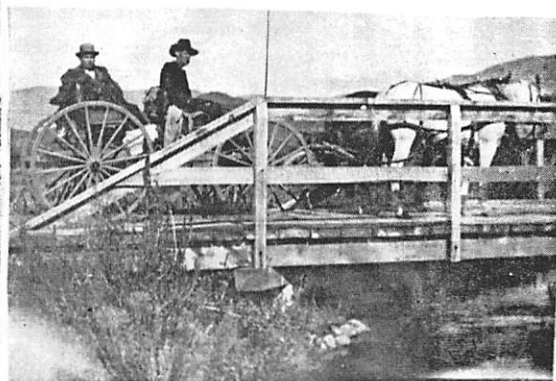
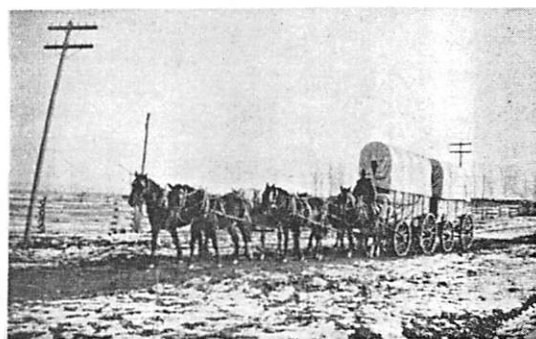
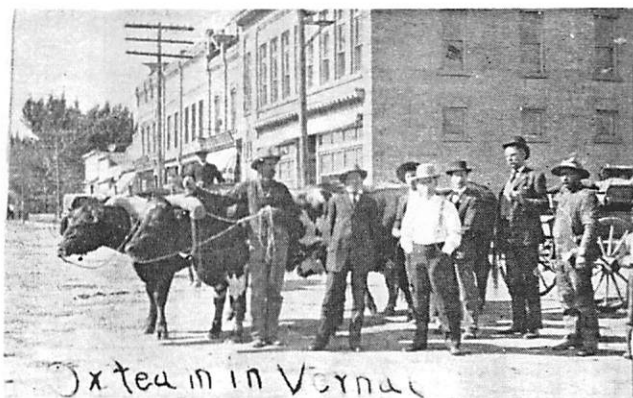
GROWTH IN VERNAL'S TRANSPORTATION



the agent there for many years. Upon arrival here the bill was checked by the merchant and freighter and many times the weight of the cartons or weights were deducted from the weight of the items, making it necessary for the freighter to stand the loss in the weight of the cartons, etc.

The merchants rotated the freight shipments and gave each man an equal chance. However, some of them hauled winter and summer, others only when the farm work permitted, but each came

in their turn. There were always two outfits together and sometimes three, but not more. It was an unwritten law of the freight road that "you help me and I'll help you," and this proved to be a wonderful creed by which to live because hardly a day passed when they did not need each other's help in some way. It was necessary to not only carry food for themselves but hay and grain for animals, also barrels of water for the horses and a large roll of bedding. Many men did not own tents so their



Ox Team in Vernal

John and Docia Clark

Wash Caldwell and Mathew Caldwell

H. Herbert, Geo. Wardle. Mud in Indian canyon

Freight Teams of Uintah Railway

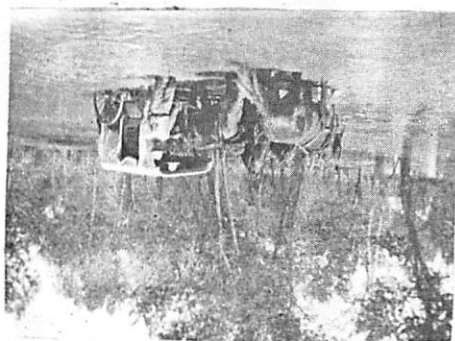
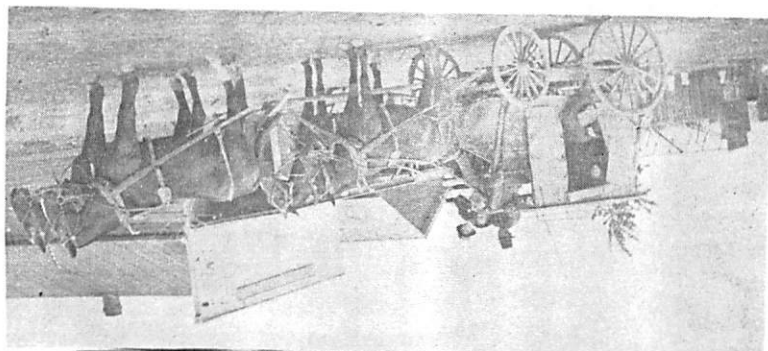
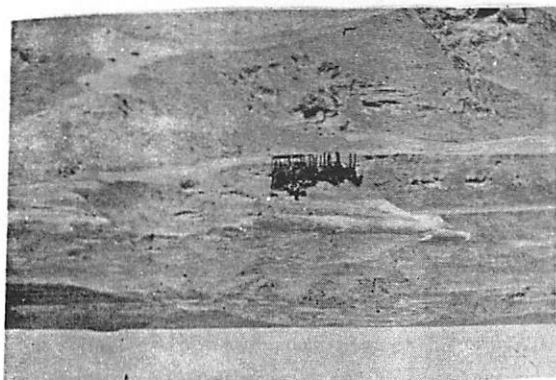
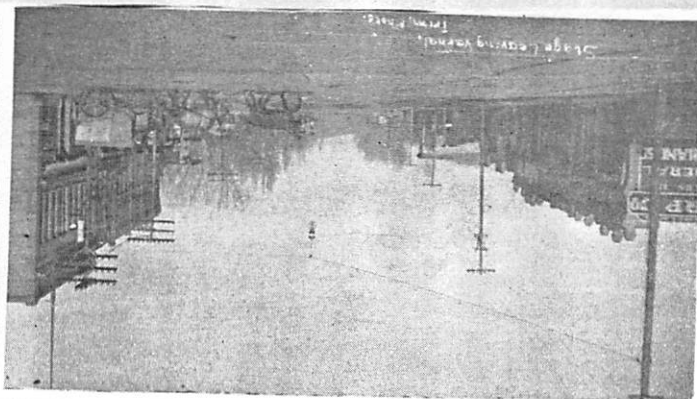
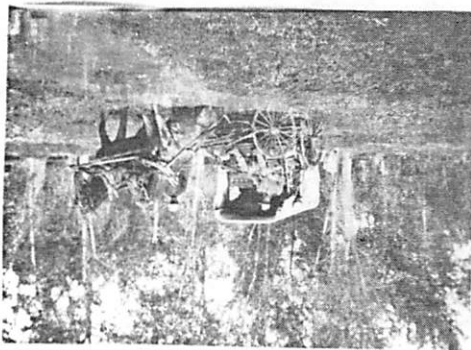
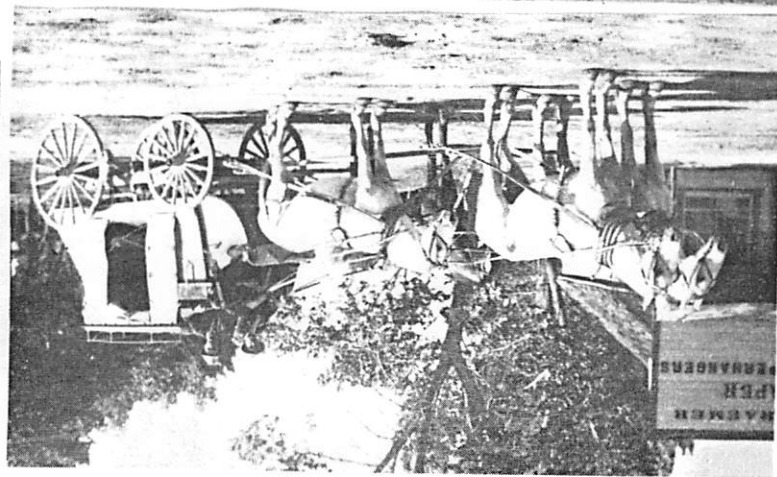
White River

berry, Fruiland, Duchesne and Vernal. Who the original finders of this route were, is very uncertain. Mr. C. B. Bartlett quotes the old gentleman Hatch as having said, "This road was the most natural route to be found," or words to that effect.

We know that J. C. Fremont, in 1844, followed a route from Utah Lake through Uintah and Ashley to Brown's Park. Perhaps Fremont followed this natural route. This general route was on the trail between Utah Lake and the Platte region followed by fur traders in the 1830's and 1840's. How early it was established, the writer is yet uncertain. That it did follow a most natural route is unquestionable.

That the early traders and explorers followed the paths of least resistance is a certainty, and that natural trails had long been sought out by Indians is a matter of fact.

The Uintah and Ashley Valleys, besides being on the trail between Utah Lake and the Platte region, were also at the crossroads with another route of travel between Taos, New Mexico and Fort Bridger to Fort Hall. There were various trails over the Uintahs as used by the early Rocky Mountain Fur Traders. In 1869 we have already recalled the entry of William Gibson, Pardon Dadds, Blankenship, Professor Marsh and others who came into the valley.



## UINTAH'S EARLY STAGE COACH DAYS



the business men of Vernal and interested spectators witnessed the arrival. The mail was distributed and ready for the people at the noon hour.

"The car left shortly after noon for the return trip to Dragon, taking the mail and three passengers. The Express truck arrived during the afternoon from Dragon loaded with trunks. Incidentally, it was a heavy day for the stagecoach went out part way and relieved the truck of several heavy trunks."

June 3, 1910. Vernal Express:

"With the four-in-hand and stage, goes Bob Johnson. We shall miss him but Bob goes to Fort Duchesne-Bonanza road and the four will be seen at that end of the line.

"Charles S. Carter, N. J. Meagher and Mrs. Chas. A. Hardy were incoming passengers on the Sunday mail from Dragon. They all appreciated the automobile ride."

And now we will ask Stella Hardy how she liked her first auto-stage ride.

"I had two little girls with me, Edna and Sarah, and had traveled all night on the train from Provo, coming on the narrow gauge over the Baxter pass to Dragon. I was very tired and had dreaded the trip on into Vernal, but much to my surprise, the car was a large one having three seats and would comfortably seat three persons in each seat. I remember that Mr. N. J. Meagher, Ezra Merkley, myself and the two children were in the rear seat, three passengers in the middle seat and the driver and two other passengers were in the front.

"My companions assisted me by carrying the children part of the way and I really enjoyed the trip until I came to the Green River crossing at Alhambra. The hill looked very steep as we started down and I wondered if we could possibly make the ferry or would be rushed right on into the water. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Johnson were running the ferry boat and were very nice to us. We were all thrilled over the advancement that Vernal had made in getting car service."

June 10, 1910. Vernal Express:

"Good roads. County Commissioners John S. Hacking and John C. Bates met a delegation consisting of Capt. M. W. Cooley, John McAndrews of Utah Railway Co., and fourteen businessmen of Vernal. Capt. Cooley explained the desire of his company to continue the auto service and how they wanted to put on freight machines, but said that better roads were needed. A committee was elected to investigate the matter."

The Express, June 23, 1932:

Frank Davis, son of Joseph Davis, and Mrs. Hannah Parker was born in Pleasant Grove, Utah July 28, 1884. He came to Vernal when ten weeks old. He made his home in Glines. He helped bring

the first string of big trucks into this county for the Castle Peak Mining company. Big Davis trucks, that proved to be too big for any of the bridges and could not be used at that time. In 1913, the A. M. Murdock Stage Company sent him to Milwaukee, Wis., to take a course in auto assembling, preparatory to starting the operation of the first auto stage line from Colton to Vernal. He helped pioneer most of the automobile routes into the Valley until he accepted a position with the government on their Star Route to Vernal, in 1919. He started as truck driver, advanced to foreman of trucks and men and later, superintendent of the Star Route. He left the mail route to take up another pioneer experience in the spring of 1926, that of establishing the Sterling truck route through the Strawberry valley. Exposure and difficulties caused his health to break and in November, 1929, he went to California where he died, June 12, 1932.

Vernal Express Dec. 27, 1918:

The Duchesne Stage and Transportation Company is furnishing elegant services from Helper to Vernal. Passengers who board this company stage are never sure whether they will get through without traveling all night or not. A passenger complained to us the other day of the treatment received at the Leavitt station, where they transferred to bob sleighs. People and mail were put in the same conveyance.

March 15, 1918:

State Road Commission will meet March 21 with committee of Uintah county to make financial arrangements for the completion of the work started last year for the Duchesne-Helper and Price-Myton roads. \$1000.00 was given to purchase scrapers and other necessary tools.

July 12, 1918. Vernal Express:

\$500.00 county funds and \$825.00 from sheep men, and men owning farm lands on Diamond Mountain will contribute labor for a road to be built to the summit of the mountain so that cars can travel over it.

Sept. 13, 1918. Vernal Express:

There is a probability that the Government will take over the handling of the mail, Vernal to Watson. The present contract of the Uintah railroad expired July 1. Their new bid too high. Trucks to be used, 2 two-ton and one 1-ton. The mail was not to be routed by Duchesne as that is a longer distance.

What high hopes were built up by this change, everyone was sure there would be no more trouble. A string of Packard trucks to be operated by discharged soldier boys would answer all the difficulties. In November we read: "The war Dept. was asked to release 7 trucks and 4 men for a 115-mile Star Route between Helper and Vernal, Utah, driv-

ers paid \$4.00 per day, and Dec. 20th brings this startling information: "The Government will operate the mails between Helper and Vernal, commencing Jan. 1. This will discontinue hauling the mails between Watson and Vernal and cancelling of the contract between the government and the Duchesne Stage and Transportation Company. Official notification to P. M. David Bennion comes as a complete surprise. 'It has been decided to omit the Star Route service as now performed between Watson and Vernal, after Dec. 31, 1918, and all mail now dispatched over that route should be accordingly.' It was perplexing. It was only two weeks since an agreement was reached between the Uintah railroad and the government for transfer of mail over the Watson route. It is known that the Helper Duchesne is not open for motor trucks the year round, it becoming necessary to change to bob-sleighs to get over part of the road between Leavitt's station and the other side of the summit, 10 miles. This new route opens added possibilities to residents of Uintah, insuring a rapid parcelpost and market for various products. Good travel will be available. This is the first government-owned and operated mail service in Utah. If it proves successful, other lines will be opened."

Vernal Express, Jan. 31, 1919:

The Commercial club asks that Uintah county receive share of Proposed Bond issue introduced into the state legislature by L. W. Curry for issuing road bonds and a definite building program be laid out and the appropriation for this county and the creation and construction of a permanent highway between Vernal and Salt Lake. The trucks had not arrived for the mail service in February but Inspector Dawson had been in and promised three trucks and seven men drivers.

Vernal Express, March 14, 1919:

"Mail service not successful. (we read) Our kick is against the postal authorities, they arbitrarily canceled the mail contracts with Uintah railroad and Duchesne Stage Company before they were ready to do business. They shipped a lot of trucks to Helper that were not suited for this county, we have it on good authority that Parcel Post is piled all along the road between Vernal and Helper, 16 tons of parcel post stacked under snowbanks."

Immediately talk was started of a Grand Junction road. Protest wires were sent to Washington, D. C., and asked that the Watson route again be opened, and of course, we all remember how for months we never knew when would come in and when it wouldn't. But in Salt Lake City, help was on the way. The State Road Commission had appropriated five million dollars for road work and one-eighth of it was earmarked for Uintah county. The plan approved called for 45 miles, Castlegate to

Duchesne, 61 miles Duchesne to Vernal, 20 miles Heber to Fruitland. "The highway from Vernal to Salt Lake will be a busy scene this year", and in Uintah the election passed for the issuing of \$140,000 for county roads.

April 11, 1919, Vernal Express:

John N. Davis, Don B. Colton, L. W. Curray, Earl Thompson and James H. Wallis to meet Mr. Davidson and Dawson, the special agents sent from Washington, D. C., to look into the mail situation." But it is summer now and good service is expected until fall, and all this time a seething excitement going on over a railroad, and even an airline to be established here.

September, 1919:

Two hundred men put to work on the road. Surveyor Nile Hughel resigned. He had surveyed all the proposed roads and had everything at his fingertips. We will miss him sorely. But the tension has relaxed. Supt. Young of Uintah Basin U. S. Mail Truck System, is giving excellent service. There are seventeen trucks with ex-service drivers. Fruit and other produce is being brought in. Some of the drivers are: Jay Pope, Lawrence Pack, Clyde Walker. The government, Carbon county and the state is to spend \$275,000 on the road from Price to the Uintah Basin. Mr. Browning of the State Department says that we owe more to Mr. Curry than any other man in the legislature. We will leave them working on the road and see what 1920 brings us.

Vernal Express, Nov. 1, 1920:

The Vernal-Helper stage is now making regular trips. If the government helps us with the road the bed will have to be 24 feet wide and hard-surfaced, if not, it will be 18 feet wide and of dirt.

Vernal Express, March 13, 1925:

New Federal Building Completed.

Bids for mail route asked for. Route opened by Government April 16, 1919 under Supt. Joe Tullis and Frank Davis. Bids will be open Jan. 19, 1926. And the Government, after years of development through trial and error, and the intensive program of road building that went on during that period, was asking for bids on the Star mail route. But we turn our leaves hurriedly over and find that in 1932 we are still not happy and are asking for more changes and faster travel.

Vernal Express, Dec. 15, 1932:

Civic clubs of Eastern Utah discussed the proposed change of mail route from Salt Lake via Heber and Strawberry Valley and into Duchesne and Uintah counties instead of to Price as at present routed. The government did not favor a change at present. The people in Uintah Basin favor the route change



and those opposing do so for fear the contract for handling mail might go out of government hands and thus impair the service. It was brought out that the Strawberry route can be successfully kept open for year-round traffic, having been kept open for the past four years, being closed only forty hours in that length of time, while the Indian canyon route was closed forty-eight hours during that same period.

Vernal Express, April 26, 1934:

Basin Mail to Be Routed via Strawberry Valley. Dept. urged to continue to maintain the garage to Price, and at least a skeleton force until it has been demonstrated that uninterrupted service can be maintained throughout the winter between Salt Lake and Vernal. The change was made and the mail contract was awarded to Thomas T. Iles of Craig, Colo. Vernal held a huge July 4th celebration and historical parade including the evolution of the Uintah Basin mail service from Pony Express to present time.

### FROM STAGE COACH AND COVERED WAGONS TO DAILY MAIL AND BUSES

In the early years of the Ashley Valley settlement it was very difficult to get any mail into the Basin, especially during the winter when there were several feet of snow to block the mountain passes. The first postoffice was located at Ashley Fork, installed there in 1877-78 with Will Britt acting as postmaster. In 1879, Otto Peterson carried the mail on snowshoes over the Taylor mountain from Green River City, Wyo. He wasn't a paid mail carrier, and the settlers would give him produce and what they could for this service. It was in December that a terrible snowstorm closed all the mountain roads, five different men tried to make the trip via Brown's Park for the mail. Two of them froze their feet and almost lost their lives. Mr. Peter Dillman finally made the return trip and the settlers persuaded him to continue carrying the mail all that winter.

In the early eighties, Fort Duchesne was established as a Military Post, a road was built to Price from Fort Duchesne via the "Duchesne Bridge," the place where later, Myton was built up, and mail was brought in by people from Price to the Fort, and from there on into Vernal.

Many interesting stories are told of the experiences of many of the first travelers over these perilous and dangerous byways, the mountains were steep and almost impassable, while the streams were rough and during flood season always treacherous. The first roads were built along the natural routes as were the Indian trails. In 1909 a map was made by Nile Hugel, showing the old Mail and State roads, the old road to Burnt Fork, Wyo., and Manila, Utah, Brown's Park road and the old road to Bonanza. In 1910, A. Theodore Johnson made a map showing all the roads in Uintah county.

There was a special tax of two and one-half mills levied, to be used for the maintenance and construction of the county roads. These, and also the state roads, were dirt and very rough, being muddy in spring and fall, dusty in summer, and blocked with snow in the wintertime. Both funds and equipment were limited, it was a hard task to keep the roads up, and in even usable condition. The taxes were often paid in work and a record of all the road work done was kept in the county commissioners' minutes.

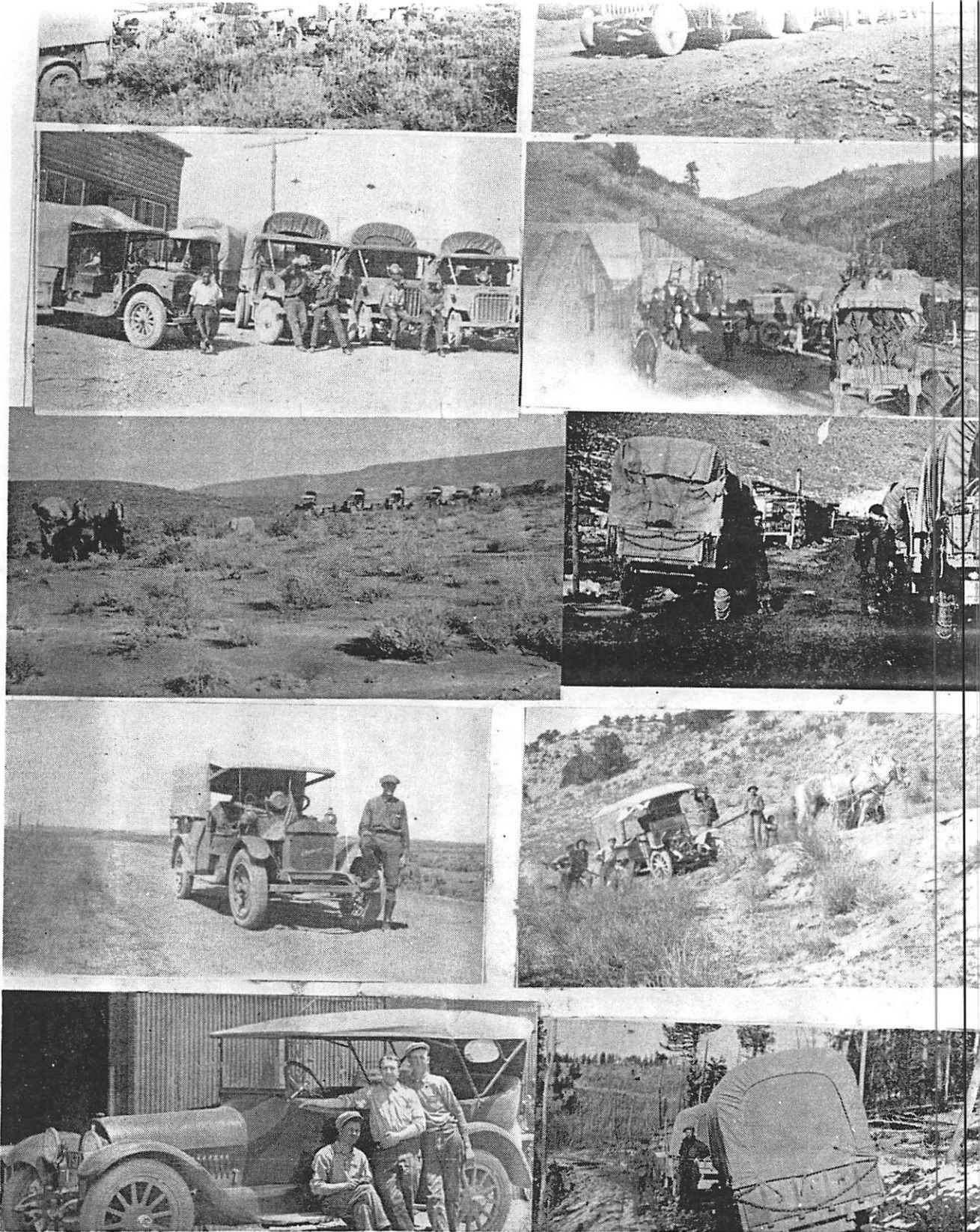
It was in 1881-82 that Peter Peterson had the mail contract to Ouray and John Harper and John McKeachnie Sr., used buckboards and drove two horses while working for him.

About 1880 the mail was brought into Vernal over the mountain from Rock Springs, Wyo., by Pony Express. The riders were Ed. Carroll, John Glines, and Henry Coleman. The route they followed was: after leaving Rock Springs they crossed the Green River at the Jarvie Ferry, came through Brown's Park, up the Mail Draw, over Diamond Mountain, across Brush Creek, and then through the little Mail Draw east of the Stainaker Draw, this part of the route was changed to the Paddy's Gap road then by the Karren and Kabell ranch into Vernal.

In 1888, Mr. Thomas Mitchel asked for permission to open the postoffice in what is now Vernal. He requested the name of Ashley Center; permission for the office was granted but the name Vernal suggested in the place of Ashley Center. This change was accepted by Mr. Mitchel and the residence of the locality, so the town received its name.

The settlers increased rapidly and improvements were made accordingly and every effort was made to have regular mail brought into the Valley. Mr. Morrell tells us that in 1894 mail was being delivered every 36 hours and by 1901 the contracts called for mail to come from Price seven times per week. Ed Lee contracted the mail and Lyle, Ed and Gib Curtis were driving for him. It was only letters and papers that was brought my mail. However, everything else came with the freight teams. Varied and colorful were the experiences of these pioneer mail men, but the mail came through and the people met at the postoffice to discuss further improvements, and to talk about the weather.

The story is told by Wm. Mott of how the 1905 rush that brought the settlers into the Valley and onto the Reservation in such large numbers, found every kind of vehicle on the dusty roads, stage coaches, wagons, horses, and even people on foot. The wagons were equipped with spring seats, three and four to the outfit. There were no covers over them and four horses were used to bring the passengers over the dry and dusty roads. When they finally reached Vernal, a distance of 64 miles from



U. S. Gov. trucks in Indian canyon. The station in Indian canyon pass where mail would be held up for months at a time. bobsleds were used to transfer mail and passengers over the mountain. The story is told that one time a bag of money was lost in the warehouse for a period of months, the men thinking that it was a bag of washers; it was found by Bob [unclear] delivered to the Duchesne P. O. This mail truck was driven by Mr. Johnston in 1916. Washout above Antelope Creek station. fer started. Ash Roberts and the first Gov. mail truck brought into Vernal. The Garford truck driven by Jack Eagers, was ing mail on Indian Canyon pass for A. M. Murdock. The Buick stage used from Watson to Vernal in 1915 by Uintah R. der, Harry ---, Robert L. Johnston. Mail trucks in the mud.

freight lines, with E. S. Gurr as road foreman. They were driving the four-horse stage coach with Bob Johnston, Dave Johnston, Ed Wardle and George Bagle as drivers. The stations were White River, (called Ignatio), Kennedy, Alhandra, and Chepeta.

Mr. Ted Corless who had been since 1902 working for the St. Louis Asphalt Co. with a crew of men, getting the patents, working the assessments, and building the roads to the claims, was asked to live at Whiteriver where the old wooden toll bridge was located. He moved there from Vernal, after having lived at Bonanza and Dragon, where he was injured. Both Mr. and Mrs. Corless saw the flood take out the Wooden White river bridge; the station was then moved up to the new Steel bridge. They spent about 26 years in collecting toll for the White River bridge.

Mr. James McNaughtan was the first regular ferryman at the Alhandra Station. He lived there with his family from 1905 to 1910 and then Mr. Bob Johnston and his family moved into the station.

The story is told how Bob Johnston brought the mail through one spring day, when he arrived with his stage and Dr. O'Donnell as a passenger to the banks of the Green river. They found the ice breaking up, and it was impossible for them to cross in the stage. The contract called for the delivery of the mail to Vernal twelve hours after leaving Dragon. Mr. Johnston being anxious to fulfill his obligation, told Dr. O'Donnell that he was going to cross the ice on foot. She said that if he would help her, she would come too. Mr. Johnston took her hand and the locked mail pouch and they jumped from block to block of ice, and so crossed over. Here they got into the stage waiting on the opposite side of the river for them, and proceeded on to Vernal.

The stagecoach was used until 1908, when the car bus was started. Buick cars were used and in 1917, the following men were driving for the Uintah Railway Co.: Billie McCaw, Fred Youst, Bert Wade, Carl Offers, Felix Wade and Glen Ballenger. Mr. Graham was the first foreman for the Auto Line, and he was followed by Dan Carpenter. The line was discontinued in 1919.

In the midsummer of 1912 the government advertised for bids for the transportation of mail between Price and Vernal, a number of public-spirited citizens of Duchesne called a meeting in the town hall of Duchesne to discuss the matter. Ten of the men, A. M. Murdock, Clyde H. Stevens, Dan T. Powell, M. L. Narsing, Ed. Gardener, J. E. Van, G. V. Billings, H. C. Nicol, R. M. Pope, and M. B. Pope, organized a company called the Duchesne Stage and Transportation Company, for the purpose of carrying mail and passengers and express. Clyde H. Stevens applied for the contract while the other stockholders signed the bond. G. V. Billings was the first manager of the company. The contract

was awarded to C. H. Stevens and A. M. Murdock. M. P. Pope and John Fortie went to Salt Lake City to buy two Buick cars, and Dec. 1st, 1912, for the first time the mail was brought in by the Duchesne Transportation Company.

After a few months' operation, when the parcel post service was extended to twenty, and two months later to fifty pound parcels without the government making any compensation for the new service, the contract and the stock of the company was turned over to A. M. Murdock, who then with Monte Young, continued the contract for the two-year period remaining.

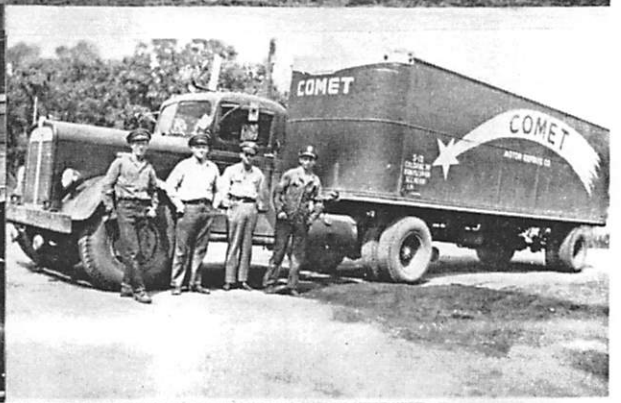
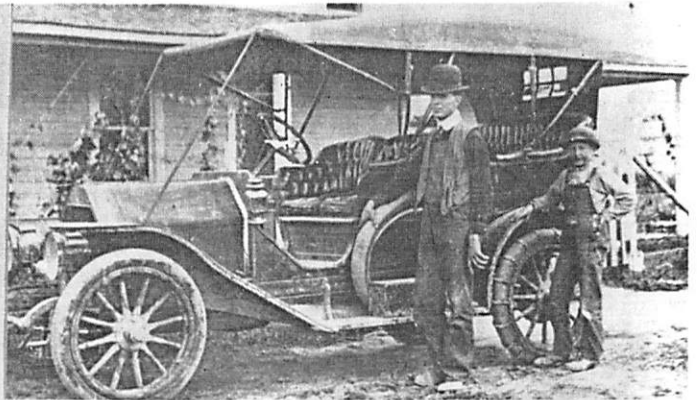
From 1914 to 1917, Monte Young had the contract and it was then turned back to A. M. Murdock. In July of 1918, Mr. Murdock reorganized and enlarged the business, engaging James Frontjez as manager, installing new equipment and changing the name to "Duchesne Transportation Co." Everything went smoothly until December of 1918 when the government decided to take over the mail service and made the Transportation Co. continue on an agreement from day to day. The service was to be taken over Jan. 1, 1919, but unexpected difficulties arose and several times a day the government service was postponed, making it very difficult for the Transportation Co. to live up to the contract and give people the service desired.

The government service opened April 16, 1919, under Supt. Joe Tullis and Frank Davis. In the Sept. 19, 1919 Vernal Express, we find this statement, "Mail service between Helper and Vernal is the very best. Lake Young, Supt. of Uintah Basin U. S. Mail Truck System, is giving the Basin good service with 17 trucks and ex-service men for drivers."

It was in 1901 that Vernal had increased in population until there was need of rural delivery, and two routes were opened up with Wm. Stone on Route 1 and L. Pack on Route 2. In 1905 Mr. Stone left this employment and the mail was carried by the late David L. Richards, who remained on his route until his full 25 years were completed and he was given a pension by the government. In 1910 Richard Jensen was given the Route 1 and he also completed the full 25 years, during this time every known method of travel was used. At first it took all day to complete the route, but with cars and hard-surfaced roads, 1947 finds the mail being delivered in a few hours. Much credit is due these sturdy men who have watched the Ashley Valley grow from a desert waste to a lovely home for over 6,000 people.

The present postmaster, Pontha Calder, explained that Vernal is now classed in the second-class division, that we have in 1947, daily mail from Salt Lake City and six times per week from Craig, Colo. Parcel post has been delivered since 1915. In 1916, our local Bank of Vernal was shipped in by





The wooden White river bridge when the flood destroyed it. John Pope and Vernal's first car: 1908 Oldsmobile: The A. M. Murdock 25-passenger car, 1917. Passenger bus. Charles Palmer, Albert Slaugh, Jess Morrison, and Shirley Slaugh with 1917 Comet truck. Harry Frontz, Bob Johnston, Stanley Slaugh, Leo Kessler, machinists: first Gov. mail trucks and drivers: Slaugh took the place of Lawrence Pack after first year. Johnston made first trip from Vernal to Salt Lake; Harry Frontz being the first to bring the mail in from Salt Lake.

parcel post, each brick being wrapped separately and the distance traveled was 408 miles, as it had to come by way of Dragon. They were shipped that far by train and then on freight wagons, cars, and trucks, and every other available means. It so completely tied up the mail that it was necessary for a new law to be enacted limiting any one shipment to 200 pounds per day, and any one package to 70 pounds.

Several changes were necessary when the government took over the mail route, for one thing, the Public Service Commission of Utah had been created in 1917 and it now became necessary for a license to be issued to companies operating stage or truck lines. At this time several individuals were hauling freight and passengers from Price, Helper, and Salt Lake. One of the first companies organized was the Vernal Auto Company with Walter Barns and T. G. Alexander as partners, and another company that brought freight into Vernal was the Harmston Brothers Co. This company was organized with Les Mullins, Johnny Johnson, Harry Spouse and Eugene and Floyd Harmston. They organized to take care of the Gilsonite at the Raven mine, and made daily trips to Price. They would bring back any freight available for the Basin. This line was operated by the Harmston Company under the name of Eastern Utah Transportation Co. They sold about 1926 to Willard Richards and Arch Jones of Salt Lake City, who sold in six months time to A. T. Burton, also from Salt Lake. Mr. Burton continued to operate the Eastern Utah Transportation from Price, but he also bought the Sterling Transportation Co., that had been started by Mr. Shaw, who owned the Sterling trucks from which the company took its name, and these were operated between Vernal and Salt Lake; Provo, and Heber, hauling gilsonite out and freight into the Basin.

Harmon Sowards and Jess Evans bought a Nash truck from the Vernal Auto Company and hauled freight at the same time that Bob Johnston and Devere Carroll were freighting. They operated several years when they sold to T. G. Alexander, later buying back the company and operating it until about 1927 when they sold out to A. T. Burton, reserving only the right to haul gas and oil.

T. G. Alexander was hauling from Price with a Nash truck, making daily trips, when he purchased an interest in the Vernal Auto Company. Mr. Byron Thomas bought out the Walter Barns interest and he and Mr. Alexander started hauling the wool from Bonanza. Later he traded his interest for the Dry Fork ranch and his equity was turned over to Mr. Alexander. The trucks and equipment was sold to O. L. Jacobson, who continued to haul wool from Bonanza.

The Uintah Freight Lines, a subsidiary of Inland Freight Lines of Salt Lake, owned and operated by

Ray Lilienquist, have their station in the new building on 7th West and Main. The Sterling Transportation name has been changed but the Eastern Utah Transportation Co., will still be operated under that name from Price to Roosevelt and Vernal. The above companies were purchased in November, 1946.

In 1934 the government asked for bids for mail service between Vernal and Price and between Vernal and Salt Lake City. The contract was granted for the Salt Lake to Vernal route and the Comet Motor Express was the first company to deliver mail over this road. For four years three local men drove the mail trucks for this company. They were Bob Johnson, Stanley Slaugh, and Harry Frontz. At the same time this company was bringing the mail in from Craig. It is interesting to know that the Comet Motor Co. was in operation on an interstate basis one year prior to the Inter State Commerce Act that was passed in 1935, at first under the direction of Thos. S. Iles, then E. E. Brockman. It is said that these two men with their foresight and business initiative, did a great deal toward the progression of freighting and trucking in this section. In 1935, they hauled freight from Salt Lake to Denver with depots at Craig and Vernal. They had in 1939, seven straight trucks, but now in 1947 they are operating 29 units according to the local agent, Albert Slaugh. In 1938 Frank Edwards took the mail contract and then in 1942 it was given to Mr. McMichael, who continued until 1946.

While the mail was taken over by the government and the freight lines by trucking companies, the passenger lines were being operated at first by several individuals, these were coming from different towns into Vernal. George Fredrick White is credited as operating the earliest stage line between Vernal and Price. For about five years A. M. Murdock discontinued, Henry Bottom took over the passenger line in cars from Vernal to Helper, and then the Baxter Bros. of Provo ran the stage line from Helper for about two years.

At this time Jess Johnson, Ed Wentzel, Lou Jones and Hop Jones organized the Dodge Stage line and operated from Price to Roosevelt. They came in over the nine-mile canyon route, then they purchased the Baxter Bros. interest and operated from Helper to Vernal for some time. At this time the Strawberry route was being used during the summer months, the Helper route was abandoned as soon as the roads were kept open over the Strawberry Pass, and for four years the destinations were Heber and Vernal.

The Warren Bros., Doc and Norl, bought the Wentzel interest and they were connected with Mr. Johnson for some time. Seven-passenger Studebakers were used on the Price road, touring cars were still used on the Heber route, when Mr. Johnson and Alva Colman cooperated. They opened the

route through to Salt Lake with offices still in Heber and in Salt Lake, the Price route that had been operated for eight years was discontinued and the equipment for the Salt Lake route was leased to the Alexander Company with Ralph, George, Jim, and Harold Alexander, and Stanley Slaugh driving the daily trips through to Salt Lake City via of Heber.

In 1931 five-passenger touring cars were used but by 1935 twenty-one-passenger Studebaker buses were in use and when at this time the I. B. James Company of Denver purchased the franchise from the Johnson and Coleman Company and the equipment from the Alexander Company, they put on the 29-passenger yellow coaches. Now in 1947, the A.C.F. 35-passenger coaches are being used and what once was a hard, tiring trip, has become a five hour comfortable ride into Salt Lake City with such pleasant drivers as Jack Armstrong, Wess Chapman, Spike Hayward, Cliff Wilderson, Vernal Beckstead, Melvin Woods, Keene Carver, Frank Perry, Claude Horn, Peterson, and ——— Reaber, the Company is known as the Denver and Salt Lake Pacific Trailways.

#### EXPERIENCES OF HARRY RATLIFF

I had to go. I had to know  
Why deserts starve, while the rivers carve  
And tear out a mountain's heart.  
I had to go. I had to know  
Why rivers run, where they begun  
To break these hills apart.  
There's a voice. A conscious urge  
Leave no choice. This stir and surge.  
Day and night repeated,  
Oft my pillow cheated,  
Until the snows ran out in showers.  
Until rainbows came back in flowers.  
Is it true: are mountains blue;  
Rivers tear with constant care,  
Canyons deep, where ledges keep  
Hidden tight from mankind's sight  
Things unseen? Know what I mean?  
I had to go. I had to know  
Why deserts starve, while the rivers carve  
And tear out a mountain's heart.

Mountains are bewildering. Their immensity is a tremendous thing. Their complexity is baffling, but their charm is undisputed.

Rivers challenge the right of the mountains to protect and preserve their treasured privacy. They tear out the very mountain hearts with savage persistence.

Both mountains and river water betray, by their massed might, the forces that cause them to be.

The Uintah Mountains are conspicuously contrary. They even oppose their own kind by stub-

born adherence to their direction of East and West, which no other range of American Mountains do.

Green River has long been a place of conflict, hostile to every practical purpose. She is a natural born bandit, as much as a river can be. She carves into canyons and chasms, mountains that are wholly innocent of wrongful, willful interference with her passage. There is no sense, whatever, in her behavior, except to mutilate or expose the mountains' privacy or to show off her own immodesty and unmoral exuberance. After she has done these things, she sneaks along, ashamed, but clinging to the fruits of her fantastic orgy, which clog her channel; and, sick with her burden of sluggish sludge, she is forced to free herself from her gluttony, to awaken fresh and frolicky, and to do the same fool thing again.

The first time I ever saw Green River was in 1884. My tribe, my family, forded Green River near Green River, Utah, in the fall. I have hated and loved the wanton water witch ever since.

In 1901, I, with two other men, searched her canyons from Colorado to Jensen, Utah, to learn if a railroad right-of-way could be located in her canyons. We packed our grub on our backs. We found, among other things, inscriptions on rocks, records left by other men, red and white.

We were amazed at the unbelievable height of the stone walls and dismayed by the canyon depths.

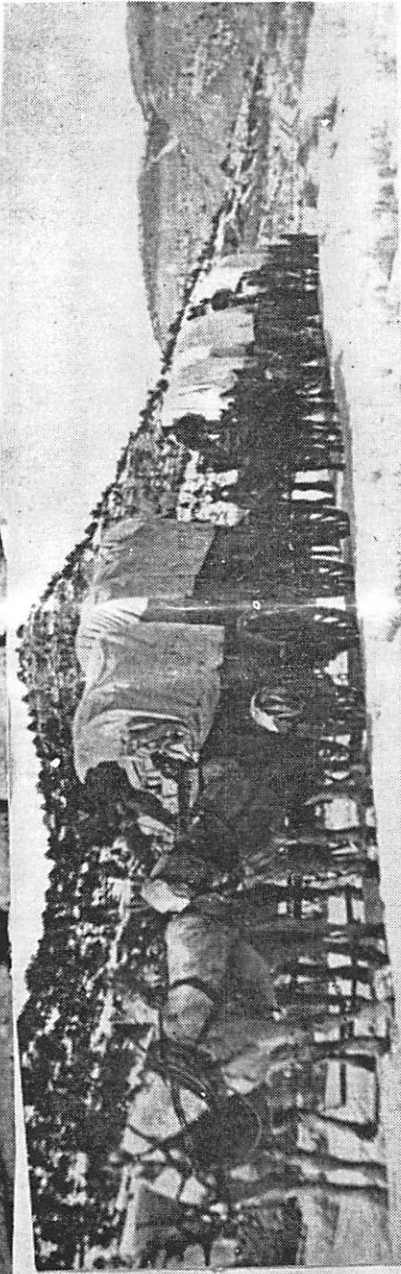
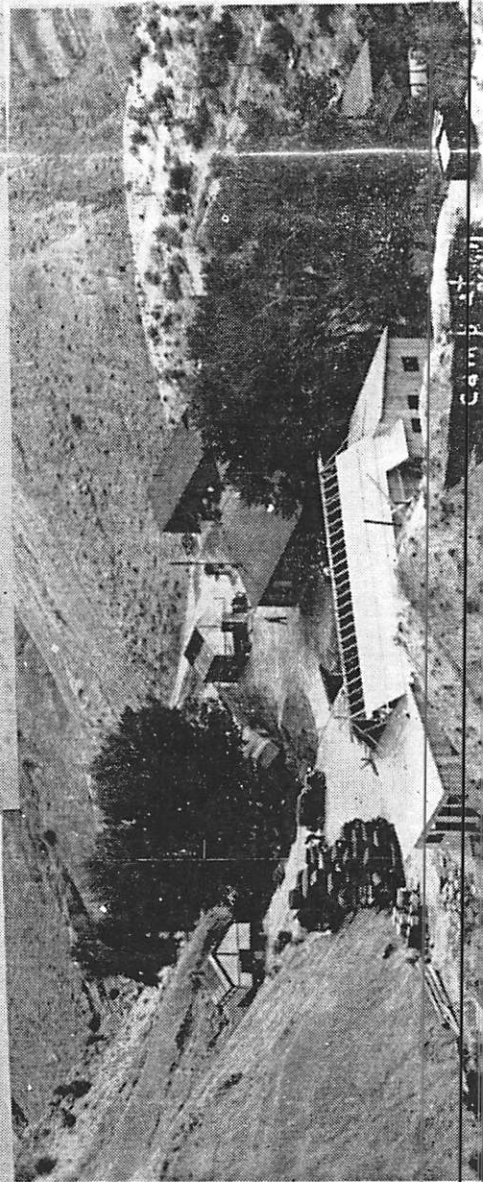
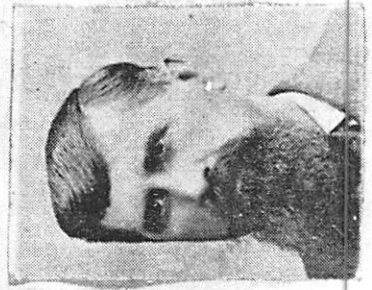
In 1910, during January, I inveigled Nile Hughle, another restless, rough, country critter, into helping me run a legal grade from the benches below Split Mountain Canyon into the canyon proper, for long before this time I had seen the idle lands and wasted water that passed beside them.

We were hauled to Watson by the Uintah Railroad, and laughed at the pugnacious efforts of the puffing contraption that pulled us up and over the Book Cliffs to Watson, where we stopped for the night. The next morning we started by horse-hauled stage over frozen rough roads for Vernal, Utah.

About half-way between where Dragon is now and where the old stage road left Evacuation Creek, the stage broke down. The driver said he would have to go back to Watson for another vehicle, so Nile and I shouldered our baggage, consisting of two grips, a transit, tripod and folding rod, and started on afoot. The driver said that if we got to White River Station the Company would take us on.

We made it into White River Station for a late lunch and hadn't more than got our soup down, when here came our wagon. Mr. Leslie Ashton of Vernal and the Indian Agent, a Mr. Neal, were there waiting to go, too, so there were four passengers. We got along fine until about eight miles out of Alhandra, when a wheel broke and there we were all "busted" down and no place to go, and it was raining too. We shouldered our packs again





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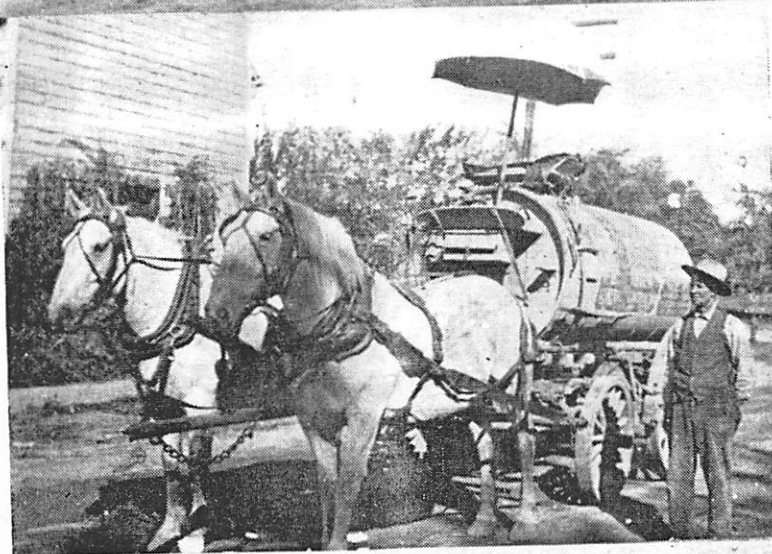
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The city's original name was Ashley Center. However, when this name was submitted to the Post-office Department it was rejected and the name of Vernal suggested instead as no other community in the country had adopted it. The suggestion was accepted and Vernal was christened.



Some of the memo-  
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